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SUBJECT: LETTER FROM A/S BLAKE TO KYRGYZ FM PROTESTING
DETENTION OF TWO FSNS

REF: BISHKEK 1171

1. (SBU) Assistant Secretary Blake requests that Post deliver the following letter to Foreign Minister Sarbayev at the earliest opportunity:

Dear Minister Sarbayev,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the continued detention of two U.S. Embassy employees, Emil Chodronov and Zamir Abdykasymov, by the State Service for National Security. Their arrest on October 22 occurred while they were investigating a visa fraud case, a routine duty for Embassy employees. They had also coordinated their investigation with the Ministry of Interior.

Since their detention, they have had only limited access to legal counsel and have not seen their families, including small children. According to the lawyers that the U.S. government has retained to defend them, this treatment violates Kyrgyz law and due process guarantees.

Since the signing of the new Transit Center agreement this summer, relations between our two countries have steadily improved, culminating in President Bakiyev's historic visit to the Transit Center on September 11 and the successful visits by you and former Prime Minister Chudinov to the United States. It is our goal to maintain the positive momentum in our relationship and build a strong and open partnership with Kyrgyzstan that can withstand any challenge or crisis.

Unfortunately, this incident has damaged Kyrgyzstan's reputation in Washington at a time when our relations were prospering. Continued detention and legal proceedings against our employees will create a serious obstacle to progress in our bilateral relations.

I await from you and the Government of Kyrgyzstan notice of the resolution of this incident and the release of Emil Chodronov and Zamir Abdykasymov. We will always be Kyrgyzstan's partner and hope that we can continue working to build the strong relationship we discussed during your visit to Washington.

Very truly yours,
Robert O. Blake
CLINTON